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GRAMMAR OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. By FRIEDRICH BLASS,
Dr.Ph., Dr.Th., LL.D. Translated by Henry St. John
Thackeray, M.A. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898.
Pp. vi + 340. \$4.50.

THE appearance of this work in an English translation calls not so much for a discussion of its merits in detail—the German original was reviewed by Professor T. D. Seymour in the issue of this JOURNAL for January, 1898 (Vol. II, pp. 155–61)—as for announcement, and the consideration of the question whether it is fitted to displace the works of Buttmann and Winer as a book for the class-room or on the study tables of students. That it will take its place alongside of these volumes in the libraries of those who aim to have all the first-rate tools of New Testament interpretation need hardly be said. Ought it to take the place of them for those who can have but one such book? In number of pages it is considerably smaller than either Buttmann or Winer, having but 340 as against 474 in the former and 848 in the Moulton edition of the latter. This diminution in size is due chiefly to the omission of extended discussion of the views of other grammarians, a gain rather than a loss, since these views have for the most part long ago ceased to be significant, and by substitution of a compact style for a discursive one. The discussion of the forms is quite full enough for practical purposes. The syntax is treated from a decidedly more modern and intelligent point of view, especially in respect to the verb. Such statements, e. g., as that of Winer that “the present participle sometimes, when combined with a preterite, represents the imperfect tense,” are not to be found in Blass. On the other hand, in important respects the work is capable of improvement. The treatment of the article is by no means satisfactory. The syntax of the verb, though manifestly an improvement on the older grammars, is as manifestly short of what it should be. How unsatisfactory, for example, is the definition of the aorist tense as denoting “completed action,” and of the perfect as expressing “the continuance of a completed action”! Not less disappointing is the inadequate treatment of concessive clauses and of clauses introduced by final particles. In general it must be said of the syntactical treatment that too little use has been made of the results of comparative syntax as set forth in the works of such men as Brugmann and Delbrück, and that too often the author has contented himself with a classification of the functions of a form, with little attempt, apparently, at exact and illuminating definition of the function. To say that it is not the duty of a grammar to do the work of the interpreter

does not meet the case; the interpretation of particular passages is not indeed the grammarian's work, but no function of the syntactician is more important than the clear definition of the various functions of the several forms and constructions. Despite these defects, however, the English translation of Blass is to be recommended as an excellent book, on the whole better adapted than any other to the use of most students. This being the case, it is the more to be regretted that the publishers have seen fit by the expedient of printing it on very heavy paper to make it a large book and put upon it a high price. The paper and the price ought to be reduced by one-half.

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DIE WORTE JESU, mit Berücksichtigung des nachcanonischen jüdischen Schrifttums und der aramäischen Sprache erörtert. Von GUSTAF DALMAN, a. o. Professor der Theologie in Leipzig. Band I, *Einleitung und wichtige Begriffe*, nebst Anhang: *Messianische Texte*.¹ Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1898. Pp. xvi + 320. M. 8.50.

THE author is well known as a specialist in the post-biblical literature of the Jews. In the book before us he attacks the problem of the original form of Jesus' sayings. There are, in fact, two problems. One concerns the teachings of Jesus as he himself uttered them; the other concerns the form in which these teachings first obtained written currency. The answer to one question does not necessarily determine the other. Probably it is now agreed that Jesus spoke Aramaic, which was the language of his province and his age. But this being conceded, it does not necessarily follow that the first written logia were in this language. The literary language of the Jews was Hebrew, even after Aramaic had become the language of common life. The first oral preaching of the apostles was indeed in the current tongue. But as a mediæval writer, even when speaking Italian, could conceive of no literature except in Latin, so the first Christian writers might regard Hebrew as the only fit vehicle for their written account. The words of Jesus in the gospels do show undoubted analogies to the literary forms of the Old Testament. This has been pointed out by Professor Briggs, whose work does not seem to be known to our author.

On the other hand, Hebrew was not the exclusive literary language

¹For the use of students the *Messianische Texte aus der nachkanonischen Literatur* are also sold separately (pp. 31; M. 0.50).